

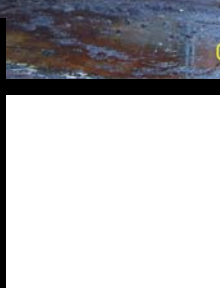


Washington State  
Conservation  
Commission

# LIVESTOCK GRANTS PROGRAM

## Phase 1 Report of Accomplishments and Results of Needs Assessment

*July 1, 2005 – October 31, 2005*



# CONSERVATION COMMISSION

## 2005 Report of Accomplishments

### Livestock Grants Program

#### Phase 1 Technical Assistance



#### Bill Language - Summary

- *The purpose of the Livestock Nutrient Assistance funding is for conservation districts to assist approximately 800 owners and operators of animal feeding operations and concentrated feeding operations in developing nutrient management plans. These operators must meet and stay in compliance with new federal water quality standards beginning December 2006. Funding will also allow conservation districts to provide information to 1000 smaller-scale livestock producers.*



#### Source of Funding

- *\$1,6 million for the 2005-07 biennium from the Water Quality Account*

#### Distribution of the Phase 1 Technical Assistance Funding

- *Distribution consisted of a six-month base allocation of technical assistance funding made available to conservation districts through an application process. All districts were eligible to receive \$5,000, and dairy districts could receive an additional amount calculated as a percentage of their past biennium technical assistance amounts.*
- *\$517,264 was distributed to 46 conservation districts for Phase 1 activities.*
- *Funding was used by districts to conduct information / education activities, distribute self-assessments, conduct a district-wide needs assessment, and provide technical assistance to landowners.*

#### Results of Needs Assessment (07/01/05 through 10/31/05)

|   |      |
|---|------|
| Livestock operations needing assistance that have had a documented discharge, are operating under an NPDES permit, or have been issued a Notice of Violation.   | 73   |
| Livestock operations needing assistance that have received a water quality complaint or notice from a regulatory agency   | 192  |
| Livestock operations in need of a new NMP.  | 2849 |
| Livestock operations in need of an updated NMP.   | 521  |
| Livestock operations needing assistance that negatively impact sensitive areas such as 303(d) listed streams, shellfish beds, domestic water sources or other sensitive areas identified as a high priority through local planning processes. | 2438 |

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**Rollup of Phase 1 Conservation Districts' Accomplishments** (07/01/05 through 10/31/05)

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Number of Livestock Workshops conducted..            | 50     |
| Number of individuals attending Livestock Workshops. | 804    |
| Number of Self Assessments mailed.                   | 13,062 |
| Number of completed Livestock Self Assessments.      | 845    |

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**Conservation District Comments**

District will apply for grants to address TA & CS needs of operators; most operators who have received citations have offered to work toward compliance; we just need money in supporting the livestock interests.

Training needed for current staff; no funds available for confined feeding areas.

Additional training of existing staff; need more information on funding sources; soft warnings from regulatory agencies would help bring in more landowners looking for assistance; due to limited number of CAFOs in this county, it may be prudent to team up with other CDs.

Project activities will slow down this winter and we will be able to devote more of our time to this grant; there is skepticism by cattlemen about this program, which we must overcome.

A high turnover rate of land in the area makes it difficult to contact livestock owners to promote the livestock assistance program; we rely on grants to provide livestock assistance, grant funding is neither dependable nor consistent, thus our programs lack consistency. Most of our grant funding for livestock assistance comes from Ecology CCWF grants. These grants are targeted to specific areas and have major cost share limitations. We are pursuing a special assessment to help give us a source of stable, as well as flexible funding.

Overcoming the concept that landowners are being told how to manage their operations; CD is working effectively w/Ecology.

Working on developing funding sources to provide necessary staffing levels. Attempting 1 FTE including planner and technician capabilities. Historically relied on partnership w/NRCS to provide ag support -- caught flat-footed. Landowner interest is extremely high but eligibility for cost share does not make sense to most.

We are working hard to make people aware that the cost share is available. We recently mailed a letter to as many livestock operators as we can find with information about the program. Several have called to schedule a risk assessment appointment. We will do the assessments during the months of Dec & Jan. There is still skepticism and distrust out there. We hope to gradually overcome that by offering the cost share money after we do the assessments. Word will gradually get out that we want to help and there is no risk involved on their part. We are certain that there are several operations that impact 303(d) listed streams. We will work to inform them of their options.

## Conservation District Comments (continued)

Currently we are completing a questionnaire to be mailed out by the end of October. This should include about 900 individuals.

Currently there is 1 FTE available to assist livestock owners with NMPs and BMP implementation. There may be more help available at some point. Currently there is a moderately short waiting period for NMPs but as more interest is generated, plans will be developed and approved according to priority rankings. Cost share is always a limiting factor and can always be dispersed if available.

With no interest in the program, additional staff would be moot; We've been careful to assure them that we don't want locations, just numbers. All we can do is wait for regulatory action.

Adequate staff for livestock assistance program. Do not have laptop available to take WQ risk analysis to landowners though not much interest from landowners to have us do so. Lack of cost share is the limiting factor.

Low survey results. We get a steady stream of interest, so will continue to increase participation through outreach & community involvement.

Staff is limited to the scope of work of their grant funding agencies. This limits larger sections of the county that are not covered in watershed grant funding. Regarding the survey/assessment, we feel that we got a better than average return on mailed surveys at 11%. Involvement from regulatory agencies, may be a bonus or a negative impact but usually serves to drive people to our door. Farmers, upon learning we are not regulatory, are very likely to use our services.

Continue to use the resources available to increase participation.

Staff will be focused on assessment through Oct and Dec. Cost share amounts need to be increased.

Staff training is needed. In our district we have 3 Category water quality problems and 5 Category 5 water problems.

Need more funding for staff, cost share & planning.

Training and certification will definitely be needed to meet NRCS standards on plans. There is no enforcement of a AFO/CAFO or any other water quality state law. The main violators are the small landowners with too many head of livestock. Since there is no enforcement, landowners figure why spent the money.

Budgeted amounts allowed by County Conservation parcel fee/tax, Grants, and other sources do not meet the amounts necessary to hire staff on a permanent basis. Until such funding is secured, staffing will remain a limiting factor. A majority of farmers contacted were either not interested in taking on further debt or were simply waiting the right time to sell their agricultural properties to developers due to both regulatory and growth related issues. Small parcel homeowners, on the other side have little interest in dealing with governmental agencies and moved to their locations to remove themselves from this perceived intrusion found in the metro or suburban environments. They are resistant to assistance or their participating in these types of opportunities for many reasons including; regulatory intrusion of property ownership and use; cost factors for improvements seen as un-necessary; or lack of knowledge of benefits that improvements may bring to the properties value and appearance.

## Conservation District Comments (continued)

Staff needs more training in Livestock/WQ BMPs installation & planning. Very poor return on mailed out surveys. Most likely operators fear giving out written information about their livestock operations. We have better success when individually contacting operators one-on-one and presenting information based on a voluntary/non-regulatory basis. Tech assistance from NRCS is limited in Whitman County. This program seems to be fast-tracked and little time for proper planning, inventories and tight deadlines for application, etc. Most operators don't make quick decisions and there's not a lot of time if cost shared BMPs need to be installed by Oct '06.

Currently working with DOE on some problem sites.

Cooperator participation is an issue. Local operators seem generally unconcerned about the new regulations. A second AFO/CAFO workshop is scheduled Nov 28. This has been an extremely challenging process because the level of apathy is very high and is very difficult to overcome.

Most of the smaller beef operations do not have the funds available to install the required fencing and off-site watering facilities that are needed to keep cattle out of waterways. The beef producers in Skagit Co were unresponsive to the Self Assessment Surveys.

Big problem with people changing their minds or backing out at last minute, causing us to have to ask for extensions, or scramble to find other interested people. A lot wasted on engineering time, planning and TA that is not followed through.

There has been some feedback from some non-dairy operations that feel they are being targeted and want to know why.

We have no livestock experts or NRCS personnel locally. Producers are reluctant to volunteer. We will continue outreach and relationship building, which we hope will help.

We are working in conjunction with Dept of Ag to get non-compliance operations in compliance and a dairy withdrawn from their Notice of Violation obligations. We also contacted Dept of Ecology to verify numbers of operations in violation.

6 months of staff funding - seek support from Commission, County, DOE, Lay off. Have made requests but WSDA is adverse to a MOU to foster communication needed for adaptive management.

Limited interest, very few taking a pro-active approach, want to wait to be "found" by Ecology.

## Washington Conservation Districts Assisting Land Managers With Their Conservation Choices